

CALIFORNIA POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION COMMISSION



PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Murray J. Haberman
California Postsecondary Education Commission
1303 J Street, Suite 500
Sacramento, California 95814-2938
mhaberman@cpec.ca.gov
(916) 322-8028

Commission to Discuss Critical Issues Facing California Higher Education

May 29, 2003 – Sacramento – At its meeting on June 3, 2002, the California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) will focus its discussion on access and diversity. Particular attention will be given to how these issues may be impacted by the Racial Privacy Initiative that will appear on the next statewide ballot, and the Michigan cases pending before the United States Supreme Court.

It will begin its deliberations by hearing presentations from Kevin Nguyen (the proponent and author of the Racial Privacy Initiative – RPI); Jay Ziegler (co-director of the “No on the Information Ban” campaign); and Thomas Wood (Executive Director of Americans Against Discrimination and Preferences.) Each of these presenters will offer a different perspective on the implications of the RPI.

Following these presentations, the Commission will convene three panels to discuss the following topics: (1) The Value of Diversity in Higher Education -- How it Can be Defined and How it Can be Achieved; (2) The Role of the Admissions Process in Providing Access for Diverse Groups; and (3) The Role of Data in Measuring the Success of Institutions in Expanding Access and Diversity – What Data Can and Should be Collected. The panels will include a broad range of educational leaders, researchers, and data experts.

The Commission has had a long-standing commitment to ensuring that all Californian’s have the opportunity to benefit from a postsecondary education. For nearly thirty years, the Commission has supported a variety of initiatives to ensure that people from all backgrounds are encouraged and enabled to pursue education after high school.

“The Commission is eager to engage in the discussion of these important topics,” said Howard Welinsky, Vice Chairman of the Commission. “This discussion will assist the Commission in evaluating how well current policies and practices are enabling Californian’s to pursue education beyond high school and determine how these matters may be effected by the pending initiative and court decisions.”

The Commission's Executive Director, Robert Moore, added, "Recent studies highlight the income gap that exists between different races. Numerous reports document the disparity in earning potential based on level of education. These economic divides do not bode well for our future. We must make sure that the state is pursuing and effectively implementing policies and practices that do everything possible to ensure that every person is prepared for and offered a real opportunity to education after high school."

The Commission will hold its June 3, 2003 meeting at the State Capitol in Room 113. Proceedings will commence at 9:30 a.m. and will conclude at 4:00 p.m.

The California Postsecondary Education Commission advises the Governor and Legislature on higher education policy and fiscal issues. Its primary focus is on ensuring that the state's educational resources are used effectively to provide as many Californians as possible an opportunity to pursue pathways to success through postsecondary education. More information about the Commission and its work can be found at its website at www.cpec.ca.gov.